

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image encoding apparatus for encoding an image signal to generate an image encoded bit stream, comprising:
  - a shape information memory for storing a plurality of shape information;
  - selection means for selecting desired shape information from said shape information memory; and
  - encoding means for generating image encoded bit stream corresponding to a predetermined image format, from said selected shape information and said image signal.
2. The image encoding apparatus according to claim 1, comprising adjustment means for adjusting the position and/or size of said selected shape information.
3. The image encoding apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said plurality of shape information are encoded in advance by an optional encoding format, said apparatus comprising decoding means for decoding said shape information and outputting said decoded shape information to said encoding means.
4. The image encoding apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:
  - first separation means for separating said shape information into header information and predetermined encoding units;
  - second separation means for separating said image signal into header information and said predetermined encoding units; and
  - said encoding means generating an image encoded bit stream by alternately

inserting said separated shape information and said separated image signals.

5. An image encoding method for encoding an image signal to generate an image encoded bit stream, comprising:

a step of selecting desired shape information from a shape information memory storing a plurality of shape information; and

an encoding step of generating an image encoded bit stream corresponding to a predetermined image format, from said selected shape information and said image signal.

6. The image encoding method according to claim 5, further comprising a step of adjusting the position and/or size of said selected shape information.

7. The image encoding method according to claim 5, wherein said plurality of shape information are encoded in advance by an optional encoding format; and

    said method further comprising a decoding step of decoding said shape information and outputting said decoded shape information to said encoding means.

8. The image encoding method according to claim 5, further comprising:

    a first separation step for separating said shape information into header information and predetermined encoding units;

    a second separation step for separating said image signal into header information and said predetermined encoding units; and

    said encoding step generating an image encoded bit stream by alternately inserting said separated shape information and said separated image signals.

9. A recording medium in which a program for encoding an image signal and generating an image encoded bit stream is stored, the program comprising:

    a step of selecting desired shape information from a shape information memory storing a plurality of shape information; and

    an encoding step of generating an image encoded bit stream corresponding to a predetermined image format, from said selected shape information and said image signal.